

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 67. Joint Resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 353. An act to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's weather research through a focused program of investment on affordable and attainable advances in observational, computing, and modeling capabilities to support substantial improvement in weather forecasting and prediction of high impact weather events, to expand commercial opportunities for the provision of weather data, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, announces the appointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress:

Deborah Skaggs Speth of Kentucky.

□ 1200

REPEALING HEALTH CARE LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BANKS of Indiana). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to follow my good friend from Iowa, STEVE KING. I know Mr. KING cares deeply about America. He not only cares deeply, but having been in the private sector in business where he, like our President, was involved in building things and making things accessible, he has good solutions. I have no doubt if he were not in Congress, he probably would have gotten the bid on the sections of the wall that the President is taking bids on even now.

We are at an interesting time. It has been interesting to see some of the messages. Some are hurtful. I know the liberal papers like the Longview newspaper immediately pick up on any dissension in the Republican Party, especially if it is aimed at conservatives like me. I don't know why we use the term "conservative." It used to be just somebody with common sense that believed in keeping our word, believed in following the Constitution.

We seem to get in trouble when we don't follow the Constitution. For example, it makes very clear that everyone who is an American citizen is supposed to have rights. We can't assure the rights of every person in every other country. That would turn into this remarkable experiment in a repub-

lican form of government that we have here.

It is really a democratic Republic—a Republic where you select representatives so that you don't have big gangs running around as a majority wreaking havoc when people disagree with them. We elect representatives so they can come together and, hopefully, read bills and not have to vote on them so they can find out what is in them, go ahead and read the bills in advance and hopefully have something to do with the writing of the bills, especially things that affect people's health.

When we see messages like have come out today, it is unpleasant. One was apparently sent out from the White House, condemning the Freedom Caucus, apparently, because we have the audacity to want Republicans, including those at the White House, to keep our promise. I still remain in favor of—as do my friends on the Freedom Caucus and a lot of others—and remain committed to our promise to repeal ObamaCare.

I realize there can be honest disagreement. Some think if we give more power to Health and Human Services, more Federal Government, and give more power to the people we trust in the Federal Government, whom I do trust, then they can do what Congress is not willing to do, and that is repeal ObamaCare and have a system in place that will assure people can get health care that is affordable.

The fact is most people talk about how we have got to make sure people can get health insurance. And then, over the years, they use the term "health care" synonymously with "health insurance." Actually, the fact is we should be most concerned about people, all Americans, having access to affordable health care, whether they have insurance or not.

One of the problems that health insurance has gotten into over the last 50 years is that health insurance has ceased to be insurance. Under ObamaCare, health insurance was certainly not insurance.

If you look up the root of insurance, the word "insure," insurance was intended to be something you could purchase very cheaply that would insure against an unforeseeable event some point in the future, maybe a catastrophic accident, a chronic disease, something that you don't expect and you hope never happens. For the insurance companies, it is actually a form of legalized wager that you are paying a little amount, hoping that never happens, but just in case it does, insurance will be able to take care of it at that point.

We have long since lost the idea of true insurance, and people began paying health insurance companies not to insure against an unforeseeable event in the future, but to pay them to manage their health care, to tell their doctors what medication they could prescribe, what procedures they would cover to help their patients, telling the patients which doctors they could see.

Actually, the truth is, as the Federal Government got more and more involved, we saw less and less insurance and more and more insurance companies managing people's health care, and the managing insurance companies were actually following the lead of the Federal Government.

The more we passed laws regarding health care and insurance, the more the Federal Government had a say in people's health care and well-being and the more insurance companies moved into a management role, much as the Federal Government in Medicare and Medicaid moved into a governing role.

This morning, I am meeting with constituents that are very caring individuals and who provide health centers that are extremely affordable, very, very cheap, but provide quality care for people that can't afford the care. They don't have to go to the emergency room, which costs more than going to a clinic for minor matters. It saves a lot of money. It is a lot of cheaper.

Of course, emergency room care is about the most expensive care you can get, and people who don't have insurance often go and line up at emergency rooms, which drives up the cost of everybody's health care and everybody's health insurance. We can break the cycle of that.

I understand there are very well-meaning friends on the Republican side of the aisle that think if we just give the Federal Government, give Health and Human Services, more power to control all of this, we have a guy in place that I do believe can do great things to cure the ills of health care.

My problem is, if we don't repeal the outrage known as ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act—which is really unaffordable—if we don't actually repeal it here in the House, have the Senate repeal it, then no matter how much those in the executive branch and those in Health and Human Services, including my friend, the Secretary, no matter how much they do to help Americans, the next liberal that comes in, the next Kathleen Sebelius who comes in thinking she knows more about what is best for you than you do, then all of those great reforms will go out the window. Because the Secretary will have more authority and more ability to make regulation under the Republican proposed bill, then I am quite certain that somebody that comes in, like Kathleen Sebelius, who knows better what you need than you do, will make sure that the regulations and the overreach become even more burdensome.

I totally understand the President's frustration. He was told that the Republican bill would basically repeal ObamaCare. The truth is I totally agree with the President. We need to act to repeal ObamaCare. I stand with the President, through whatever hardship, to repeal ObamaCare.

I have heard people referring already to the Republican bill as SwampCare. There are some good things in the bill,

but it appears to analysts that I trust and have a reputation for being accurate that premiums will go up and that this bill is not going to really bring down health insurance costs and that they may go up for the next 2 years.

Hopefully, in 2019, after Republicans have lost the majority because we didn't keep our promise, they are projecting that in 2019 the prices will go down maybe 10 percent if everything works out well. That would be good for the new Democratic majority because they will have taken office and they will get all the credit for costs coming down.

Even though it is very slightly, they will get the credit, and Republicans will be left out to dry, which means the American Dream—freedom, entrepreneurship, the ability to decide what health care you need, when, without government or an insurance company telling you otherwise—that dream of personal independence will be gone, and you will see a new America that begins to reflect the values of the former Soviet Union, which anybody that studies history like I majored in and never quit studying, you know there has never, ever been a time when socialism succeeded. It always has failed. It always will fail.

Even the Apostle Paul's effort to bring into the common storehouse and share and share alike, eventually he realized his error and that it is going to work in Heaven, but it is not going to work here. So, new rule: If you don't work, you don't eat.

The Pilgrims, just a beautiful Compact: Bring into the common storehouse, share and share alike. But after so many died that first winter, they realized: Maybe it will work out better if we let people have private property and they get to keep, use however they want, whatever they produce. What a great idea.

That kind of entrepreneurship, that kind of encouragement and incentive in this world for people to do well, to control their own destiny, is what made America the greatest country in the history of the world.

Now, as we proceeded over the years, we have moved toward more and more socialism, especially in the last 50 years. We have now allowed people like Bill Ayers to take over our educational facilities. They have been successful.

I understand 30, 40 percent of young people coming out of college today think that socialism would be a good thing. Well, it would be in a perfect world, where everybody worked as hard as they could and then shared and shared alike, but we have seen in this world that will never work. The only way socialism remains as long as it does, as it did in the Soviet Union, is if you have a ruthless totalitarian government that takes people's freedom away. But even then, it is all going to be for nothing.

We have an article from Mark Miller in Reuters, and the title is: "Republican Health Reform Is the Real Disaster for Older Americans."

One of the things I have got to say, Mr. Speaker, I was hoping in our bill—since we know and we have talked about all these years since ObamaCare passed that it cuts \$716 billion from Medicare, and seniors need help. They are beginning to experience rationed health care the way the VA has been administering to our veterans for too long.

Hopefully, we will get that fixed. I don't know the person that President Trump appointed to head up the VA. She has been part of the VA system, so I am concerned she may not be able to deliver on reenergizing the VA to actually help veterans.

With all the problems that have existed across the Veterans Administration, which are a clear example of what happens when a federal government takes complete charge of a medical system, and with all the veterans we have in record numbers committing suicide because they just feel so hopeless—they feel like there is nowhere to turn. The VA doesn't help them. They have got nowhere to turn, and they do take that irreversible step of hopelessness. People that are seeing that in the VA now are coming and saying they want the Federal Government to have more control over people's health care, kind of like the VA, because that is such a good thing.

□ 1215

Do we need more people killing themselves in the general society at the levels of our precious veterans?

I mean, let's take care of our veterans. Let's drop that to zero for veterans and let's work on it for the general population.

I do believe that the bill that my friend Dr. TIM MURPHY helped push through, did such a great job on—it was bipartisan; we had people on both sides of the aisle working fervently on that bill—I think will be able to do some good. For 30 years or so the pendulum swung too far against people getting the mental health care they needed. So it is good to see that change.

But, Mr. Speaker, this bill—I left at the end of the week last week, and I know a lot of people were down, and I was in part, but the other side was. I really felt like this was going to be a good week, we were going to come together, we were going to discuss, we were going to find a way to come together. I thought on Tuesday—Monday evening, as I saw our leadership getting together with members of our party, I thought: Yeah, I bet we can get something by the end of the week. I got the feeling most of the Republicans felt if we don't have a bill that we can agree on and get passed for the good of the American people, let's actually take steps.

Okay, our leadership said we can't repeal ObamaCare. Well, let's repeal at least as much as we can. Let's at least repeal as much as we did 2 years ago. Let's at least not give more power to

Health and Human Services. Let's at least take out some of the requirements from ObamaCare that have caused premiums to skyrocket. We are told: Well, trust HHS because they will be able to help bring down premiums so we don't have to take that action in this body ourselves.

For all of those who were ignorant and didn't understand, the Freedom Caucus was trying to reach an agreement so that we could vote a bill out of this House, but those of us in the Freedom Caucus all had heard over and over from constituents: You have got to do something to bring down the cost of our health insurance, of our health care. Our deductible is too high, we will never be able to get to our insurance help. Our premiums are so high.

I heard from businesspeople that their costs have tripled in the last few years. They cannot afford to stay in business and keep paying these high premiums for their employees. They will have to leave them high and dry, which means they go to Medicaid. And I am really shocked that even people in the Obama administration would brag about adding millions of people to Medicaid, which has not been the help that people needed. We were told: Oh, no, ObamaCare will drive them to great insurance.

No; it has driven millions to Medicaid that is even worse than Medicare.

So I know most of the Republicans on this side of the aisle believe that so many States have good solutions. So what is our solution to help the States?

Gee, if we give more power to the Federal Government, then they could start a high-risk pool that will be able to pull people out of the insurance policies where premiums are spiking, and then the Federal Government will run that for a while and then devolve it back to the States.

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, in my time in Congress and even my time on the bench as a judge and chief justice, I have watched government, and I just don't trust government. That was something I shared with our Founders. That was something Justice Scalia told to a group from my home in Tyler. There were probably 50 or 60 seniors who came up.

I asked: Is there something special you would like to see or do while you are here?

They said: Well, you seem to be friends with Justice Scalia. Do you think we could meet him?

Well, I will ask. Well, son of a gun, Justice Scalia found the time, and we met him over at the Supreme Court.

He said: Well, what questions do you have?

He didn't start with a speech.

He said: Well, okay, LOUIE said you wanted to meet me. Here I am. What questions have you got?

He leaned back against the table at the front of the room, and nobody said anything.

He said: Oh, come on, I have taken time. I want to come here and let you meet me.

I loved how abrupt he was and straight to the point.

He said: Come on, here I am, have the courage, ask your question.

One of our seniors said: Well, Justice Scalia, would you say that the United States is the most free country in the history of the world because of our Bill of Rights, that it is the best ever?

Justice Scalia surprised me, but then I thought, well, yeah, he is exactly right.

He said: Oh, gosh, no. The Soviets had a better bill of rights than we have. It had a lot more rights in there. No, no, no. The reason we are the most free country in the history of the world is because the Founders did not trust government. So they gave us a Constitution that tried to put as many obstacles as it possibly could between people in Washington—at the time, first New York, Philadelphia, then Washington. But people at the Federal level creating laws or regulations, they wanted it as hard as possible. That is why the President is not a Prime Minister selected by the Congress. It is why we have three branches instead of one or two. They wanted to make it hard to pass laws.

He went into further deliberation on that. It was very informative. He was exactly right. I studied the Soviet Government. I remember in college when I was at Texas A&M I did a paper—and I got an A on it—about the Soviet Constitution, the Soviet rights. They did have more rights spelled out. But the trouble is, their founders wanted government to do things, and trusted government implicitly so that it was totalitarian, so the bill of rights they wrote meant nothing, the Constitution meant nothing.

That is where we are headed here, it is with bureaucrats having taken charge over people's lives, their health care, their financial situations, usurping or at least getting copies of people's finance records. You used to have to get a warrant to do that.

Now the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau just gets them when they want to. That should be illegal. It should be unconstitutional. It should require a warrant with probable cause established under oath that a crime has been committed and this person probably committed it. I used to sign warrants if probable cause was established. Not anymore.

Under Obama, the Democratic Congress passed a law saying: Yeah, let them do whatever they want to somehow help us with our financial situation.

Well, when you combine what they have done with what the NSA, CIA, and Justice Department have done to invade people's rights, we are severely limited in the privacy we once had.

I know there were people who were shocked that Congress passed a bill regarding internet privacy rights, but the fact is that our party should have done a better job of getting the message out of what it really did. It just

repealed the intrusion that the Obama administration had with regulation and got us back to where we were a few years ago. So there are still protections; it is just not the intrusiveness of the Federal Government that President Obama created.

Some of us were convinced that he was not as concerned with privacy rights as we were or as others in America were, and he was not as concerned about the United States' control of the internet as we were because he gives away the ability to do websites to an international group instead of trusting the United States. That is different. President Obama didn't trust the United States to be fair to the world. Those of us in Congress, at least on our side of the aisle, thought we would do a better job. I still think we will do a better job.

What has been heartbreaking the last day and a half is to see it doesn't appear that Republican leaders are trying to work with conservatives to get to a solution. We have now seen the solution is: go to war with those who want to stand on the Constitution; contact everybody who donates to the National Republican Congressional Committee, the National Republican Party, contact the big donors who donate to candidates; and make sure they send messages to all the Republicans that they better get on board and vote for a bill that those people who are calling never read, like some of us have, and that they didn't research. They are just trusting the people they have been donating to to do the right thing.

If that were the case, Republicans would have repealed ObamaCare a long time ago, and it would have been the first thing we took up in January, and we would never have had ObamaCare because Republicans would have stopped it when we did have the chance. We had multiple chances. But that is another story for another day.

So I am sorry, this bill is going to ultimately result in Republicans losing the majority. But that is not my number one concern. Yes, it bothers me that I think this bill could lead to our loss of majority in 2018; and, yes, it concerns me that, from what I am hearing from friends across the aisle, the first thing they want to do if they get the majority in 2018 is impeach and remove from office Donald Trump.

So it has really been amazing to see the war develop the last day and a half, that those in October who stood with the President when our leaders were saying: Forget Trump. Our numbers are clear, he has no chance of winning. So our best hope is for every Republican Member to save yourself. Win your election so that when Hillary Clinton is President next January, we can, in the House, rein her in.

But I am so grateful the rank and file of our party stood fast and said: No, if Trump doesn't win, we are not going to rein in president Hillary Clinton. She will do whatever she wants.

Heck, we couldn't even get our party to impeach Koskinen when the guy

clearly lied to us here. Other members of the Cabinet in the Obama administration clearly lied, and we couldn't get our group together to remove perjuring people from the Cabinet?

At least now, hopefully, we are going to get the documentation that shows the kind of crimes that were being committed in the last administration.

But in the meantime, people are hurting. They need their premiums to come down. I know we can trust Health and Human Services in this administration to try to bring down costs. But the words of my late friend Justice Scalia: If you guys in Congress, with the power to repeal a bad bill, don't have the guts to do it, don't come running across the street to us and ask us to repeal your bad bill. Heck, just go to the floor, repeal the bad law, and leave us alone.

That is all I am asking, Mr. Speaker. The courts have not worked out extremely well for people who love the Constitution in recent years, and I know the President is frustrated. He is probably nearly as frustrated as I am almost maybe. I am told that maybe some of these anti-Freedom Caucus tweets originated with his Chief of Staff Priebus.

But I want to suggest, as Sam Rayburn did when he was Speaker: My friends, Mr. Speaker, the Republican brothers and sisters are not your enemy. They are your friends. They want to repeal ObamaCare, bring down costs, get more control back to people. If we pass a bill that doesn't bring down premiums and give the American people hope and not give more power to the government and hope they do a better job in this administration, then we will deserve to be voted out.

I just hope, Mr. Speaker, we will do what we promised to do. I hope those who are getting calls and emails demanding they call their representatives, if they have been big donors, tell their Congressmen to get on board with the bill. I hope they will trust us who are reading the bills on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PUBLICATION OF COMMITTEE RULES

RULES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ETHICS FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ETHICS,
March 29, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
House of Representatives,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XI, I submit to the House the Rules of the Committee on Ethics for the 115th Congress for publication in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

SUSAN W. BROOKS,
Chairwoman.

Enclosures.

(Adopted March 22, 2017)

FOREWORD

The Committee on Ethics is unique in the House of Representatives. Consistent with